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The Concept Of Happiness In English And Uzbek: A Cognitive And Linguocultural Analysis

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Abstract

This article examines the concept of happiness in English and Uzbek from cognitive and linguocultural perspectives. Although happiness represents a universal human experience, its linguistic expression and cultural interpretation differ depending on the historical, social, and national characteristics of a particular linguistic community. The research focuses on the semantic, cognitive, metaphorical, and cultural dimensions of the English concept *happiness* and its Uzbek equivalent *baxt*. Particular attention is paid to the identification of universal and culture-specific features reflected in lexical units, phraseological expressions, and conceptual metaphors. The study employs comparative, semantic, conceptual, metaphorical, and linguocultural methods of analysis. The findings demonstrate that both concepts share common semantic components associated with joy, emotional satisfaction, well-being, and life fulfilment. However, the Uzbek concept *baxt* is particularly associated with family relationships, social harmony, destiny, prosperity, and spiritual satisfaction, whereas the English concept *happiness* frequently emphasizes individual satisfaction, personal achievement, emotional well-being, and self-realization. The research establishes that happiness is not merely an emotional condition but a complex cognitive and cultural phenomenon reflecting the relationship between language, human experience, and national values. The findings may contribute to comparative linguistics, cognitive linguistics, translation studies, and intercultural communication

Keywords: Happiness, baxt, concept, cognitive linguistics, linguoculturology, conceptual metaphor, linguistic worldview, cultural values, semantic analysis, intercultural communication.

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INTRODUCTION. Language is one of the fundamental means through which human beings perceive, conceptualize, and interpret the surrounding world. It reflects not only the objective reality but also the collective experience, historical development, cultural values, and cognitive characteristics of a particular linguistic community. From this perspective, the investigation of linguistic concepts provides important insights into the relationship between language, thought, and culture.

One of the most significant universal concepts represented in different languages is happiness. Happiness is an essential component of human existence and is associated with positive emotions, satisfaction, personal fulfilment, social relationships, and the perception of a meaningful life. Despite its universal character, the conceptualization of happiness varies across languages and cultures. The English word *happiness* and the Uzbek word *baxt* demonstrate both common semantic characteristics and distinctive national-cultural meanings.

In cognitive linguistics, a concept is regarded as a complex mental structure that incorporates knowledge, emotions, associations, perceptions, and culturally established interpretations. Consequently, happiness cannot be examined exclusively as an emotional state because it also represents a system of culturally determined ideas about an ideal life, personal satisfaction, social well-being, and human relationships.

The theoretical foundations of the cognitive investigation of concepts are closely associated with the works of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson. In their influential study *Metaphors We Live By* (1980), the scholars demonstrate that metaphor is not merely a stylistic device but an essential mechanism of human cognition. Abstract phenomena are frequently understood through concrete experiences, physical perceptions, and spatial relationships. This theoretical approach is particularly relevant to the investigation of happiness because emotional experiences are often conceptualized through images of light, movement, possession, and space.

Zoltán Kövecses (1991) also makes a significant contribution to the cognitive study of happiness by examining its metaphorical conceptualization. His research demonstrates that happiness is represented through various conceptual structures that reflect human bodily experience and cultural knowledge. From this perspective,

metaphorical expressions provide important evidence of how speakers understand and interpret emotional phenomena.

The linguocultural approach considers a concept as a unit that combines linguistic meaning with culturally significant knowledge. In this respect, the study of happiness in English and Uzbek enables researchers to identify the interaction between universal human experiences and national-cultural values. While the English concept *happiness* is frequently associated with personal satisfaction, emotional well-being, and individual fulfilment, the Uzbek concept *baxt* often incorporates additional associations with family stability, prosperity, favourable destiny, and social harmony.

The relevance of the research is determined by the growing importance of intercultural communication and the necessity of understanding culture-specific meanings in language learning and translation. Although *happiness* and *baxt* are commonly considered lexical equivalents, their conceptual structures are not completely identical. Their interpretation requires consideration of contextual, emotional, metaphorical, and cultural factors.

The purpose of this research is to identify and comparatively analyze the cognitive and linguocultural characteristics of happiness in English and Uzbek, focusing on its semantic structure, metaphorical representation, phraseological realization, and cultural interpretation. The study aims to establish how universal human experiences are reflected in the linguistic worldviews of English-speaking and Uzbek-speaking communities and to determine the national-cultural factors influencing the conceptualization of happiness.

METHODS. The methodological framework of the research is based on the principles of cognitive linguistics, comparative linguistics, semantics, and linguoculturology. An integrated qualitative approach was employed to investigate the linguistic representation of happiness in English and Uzbek. The research material consists of selected lexical units, synonymous expressions, phraseological combinations, metaphorical constructions, and culturally significant expressions associated with the concepts *happiness* and *baxt*.

Comparative analysis was applied to identify the similarities and differences between the semantic structures of the two concepts. This method made it possible to examine their emotional, psychological, social, and cultural components within the framework of the respective linguistic systems. Componential analysis was used to determine the basic semantic features of happiness, including joy, satisfaction, prosperity, well-being, good fortune, and personal fulfilment.

Conceptual analysis played an important role in identifying the cognitive models through which happiness is represented in the two languages.

Particular attention was paid to the relationship between abstract emotional experiences and concrete domains of human perception. The metaphorical analysis was conducted in accordance with the theoretical principles developed by Lakoff and Johnson, according to which conceptual metaphors reflect fundamental patterns of human thought.

Phraseological analysis was employed to examine stable expressions and idiomatic constructions associated with happiness. These expressions were analyzed in terms of their semantic meaning, figurative structure, and cultural associations. The linguocultural method was used to establish the relationship between the linguistic representation of happiness and culturally significant values, including family, social harmony, individual achievement, destiny, prosperity, and spiritual satisfaction.

The analytical process involved the identification, classification, and interpretation of relevant linguistic expressions. Initially, the selected lexical and phraseological units were examined according to their semantic characteristics. Subsequently, their metaphorical and cognitive structures were analyzed. Finally, the cultural meanings of the expressions were compared in order to identify common conceptual features and nationally specific characteristics.

The study is qualitative and exploratory in nature. Therefore, the selected linguistic examples are intended to demonstrate semantic and cultural tendencies rather than provide statistical generalizations about all English-speaking and Uzbek-speaking communities.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION. The comparative analysis reveals that the concepts *happiness* and *baxt* possess a common semantic foundation while demonstrating differences in their cognitive and linguocultural organization. Both concepts are associated with positive emotions, psychological satisfaction, personal well-being, and the achievement of desirable life conditions. Nevertheless, the distribution of their semantic components reflects specific cultural orientations and patterns of conceptualization.

In English, the lexical unit *happiness* is closely related to such concepts as *joy, pleasure, delight, bliss, contentment, satisfaction,* and *well-being*. These lexical units express different aspects of positive emotional experience and psychological satisfaction. The word *happiness* can refer to a temporary emotional state as well as a relatively stable perception of life satisfaction. Its semantic structure includes personal fulfilment, emotional balance, positive expectations, and the realization of individual aspirations.

In Uzbek, the concept *baxt* is represented through a broader network of semantically related lexical units, including *saodat, iqbol, omad, quvonch, shodlik, farovonlik,* and *huzur*. Although these expressions belong to the

semantic field of happiness, they do not have completely identical meanings. For instance, *quvonch* primarily refers to an emotional feeling of joy, whereas *omad* expresses favourable circumstances or good fortune. The word *saodat* frequently conveys a broader understanding of happiness associated with prosperity, spiritual satisfaction, and a fulfilled life.

A significant characteristic of the Uzbek concept is its association with family and social relationships. Expressions such as *oilaviy baxt*, *farzand baxti*, and *baxtli oila* demonstrate that happiness is frequently conceptualized through family stability, mutual understanding, and the well-being of close relatives. This characteristic suggests that the semantic structure of *baxt* includes not only individual emotional satisfaction but also collective and interpersonal dimensions.

The cognitive organization of happiness is also reflected in metaphorical expressions. The conceptual metaphor HAPPINESS IS LIGHT is represented in English through expressions such as *a bright future* and *a ray of happiness*. In Uzbek, similar cognitive associations are observed in expressions such as *baxt nuri* and *baxtli kunlar*. In both linguistic systems, light functions as a source domain through which positive emotional conditions, hope, and favourable expectations are conceptualized.

Another important metaphorical model is HAPPINESS IS A POSSESSION. English expressions such as *find happiness* and *have happiness* conceptualize happiness as something that can be acquired or experienced. Similar cognitive structures occur in Uzbek expressions such as *baxtini topmoq* and *baxtga erishmoq*. These examples demonstrate that happiness is frequently understood as a valuable condition that an individual seeks to attain.

The conceptual metaphor HAPPINESS IS A JOURNEY is also represented in both languages. English expressions such as *the road to happiness* and *the path to fulfilment* conceptualize happiness as a destination that can be approached through personal decisions, life experiences, and individual efforts. Correspondingly, the Uzbek expression *baxt sari yo‘l* represents happiness as a process or direction in human life. These similarities indicate the existence of shared cognitive mechanisms in the conceptualization of abstract emotional experiences.

At the same time, Uzbek linguistic expressions reveal certain culturally distinctive metaphorical patterns. One of the most illustrative examples is *baxt qushi*. This expression conceptualizes happiness as a bird that may come and settle on a person's shoulder. The metaphor represents happiness as something valuable, desirable, and sometimes unpredictable. Its semantic interpretation is connected with favourable fortune, unexpected opportunities, and the attainment of a desirable life condition. Although English also contains metaphorical expressions

involving birds and positive emotions, the particular expression *baxt qushi* demonstrates a culturally recognizable way of representing happiness in Uzbek.

Phraseological units provide additional evidence of the cognitive and cultural characteristics of happiness. In English, expressions such as *over the moon* and *on cloud nine* communicate an extremely positive emotional condition. Their metaphorical structures associate happiness with elevated spatial positions and movement beyond ordinary physical experience. The expression *count one's blessings* emphasizes gratitude and the ability to recognize positive aspects of life. This expression also demonstrates that happiness can be conceptualized through appreciation and positive evaluation of one's circumstances.

In Uzbek, phraseological expressions such as *baxt qushi qo‘nmoq*, *baxtini topmoq*, *baxt-saodatga erishmoq*, and *baxtli hayot kechirmoq* demonstrate the relationship between happiness, fortune, life fulfilment, and prosperity. These expressions preserve culturally significant interpretations and transmit collective experience through language. Their meaning cannot always be adequately conveyed through direct lexical translation because their figurative and cultural components are essential to their interpretation.

The linguocultural analysis further indicates that the Uzbek concept *baxt* is frequently embedded in a broader system of traditional values. Family relationships, respect for parents, children's well-being, mutual support, and social stability are important elements of its cultural interpretation. The expressions *ota-ona roziligi*, *farzandlar kamoli*, and *el-yurt tinchligi* demonstrate how happiness may be associated with moral responsibility, family harmony, and the well-being of the wider community.

The concepts *nasiba*, *taqdir*, and *shukronalik* also contribute to the cultural interpretation of happiness in Uzbek. *Nasiba* refers to an individual's allotted share or fortune, while *taqdir* expresses the idea of destiny. *Shukronalik* represents gratitude and appreciation for the positive aspects of life. These concepts reveal the spiritual and axiological dimensions of *baxt* and demonstrate that its meaning extends beyond immediate emotional satisfaction.

In English, happiness is frequently discussed in connection with individual aspirations, personal freedom, self-realization, and subjective well-being. Expressions such as *personal happiness*, *individual fulfilment*, and *the pursuit of happiness* illustrate the importance of personal goals and the individual's role in achieving a satisfactory life. However, this does not mean that family and social relationships are less significant in English-speaking cultures. Rather, the selected linguistic material demonstrates a particular emphasis on personal evaluation and individual fulfilment.

The findings are consistent with the theoretical assumptions of Lakoff and Johnson, who consider conceptual metaphors an essential mechanism through which abstract phenomena are structured in human cognition. The similarities identified in the metaphorical representation of happiness demonstrate that speakers of different languages may employ comparable cognitive mechanisms based on shared bodily and perceptual experiences.

The results also correspond to Kövecses's research on the metaphorical conceptualization of happiness. His approach emphasizes that emotional concepts are structured through multiple metaphorical and experiential models. The present comparative analysis extends this perspective by demonstrating that the realization and cultural significance of these models may vary across linguistic communities.

Wierzbicka's approach to the relationship between emotions and cultural scripts is also relevant to the interpretation of the findings. Her research emphasizes that emotional concepts should be examined within their cultural contexts because the meaning of emotional expressions is influenced by socially shared expectations, values, and patterns of interaction.

An important implication of the research concerns translation equivalence. The English expression *over the moon*, for example, cannot be adequately translated through its literal lexical components. Depending on the communicative context, Uzbek equivalents such as *boshi osmonga yetmoq* or *nihoyatda xursand boʻlmoq* may communicate its intended meaning more effectively. Similarly, the expression *baxt qushi qoʻnmoq* requires a context-sensitive translation into English, such as *to be blessed with happiness* or *to find good fortune*.

These findings demonstrate that successful translation requires attention not only to lexical meaning but also to conceptual structures, metaphorical associations, emotional intensity, and cultural connotations. The cognitive and linguocultural analysis of happiness can therefore contribute to the development of more effective translation strategies and intercultural communication.

The research also has practical implications for foreign language teaching. The teaching of emotional vocabulary should not be restricted to the memorization of dictionary equivalents. It should include the analysis of phraseological units, metaphors, cultural associations, and authentic communicative contexts. Such an approach may help learners understand the relationship between linguistic expressions and the cultural worldviews in which they function.

CONCLUSION. The comparative cognitive and linguocultural investigation of the concepts *happiness* in English and *baxt* in Uzbek demonstrates that happiness is a universal human experience whose

linguistic representation is shaped by cultural knowledge, collective experience, and individual cognition. Although both concepts share a semantic foundation associated with positive emotions, satisfaction, prosperity, and well-being, their conceptual structures reveal distinctive national-cultural characteristics.

The English concept *happiness* frequently emphasizes individual satisfaction, personal fulfilment, emotional well-being, and the realization of personal aspirations. In contrast, the Uzbek concept *baxt* demonstrates a particularly strong association with family relationships, social harmony, favourable destiny, prosperity, and spiritual satisfaction. These characteristics indicate that happiness in Uzbek linguistic consciousness is frequently interpreted through both individual and collective dimensions of human existence.

The analysis of conceptual metaphors reveals that both languages employ similar cognitive models, including happiness is light, happiness is a possession, and happiness is a journey. These similarities reflect shared human experiences and demonstrate the universal mechanisms through which abstract emotional concepts are understood. At the same time, culturally marked expressions such as *baxt qushi* reveal distinctive metaphorical patterns that contribute to the national-cultural identity of the Uzbek concept.

The investigation of phraseological expressions further confirms that language preserves culturally significant knowledge about happiness. Idiomatic constructions in both languages communicate emotional states, life satisfaction, favourable circumstances, and personal fulfilment, while simultaneously reflecting different cultural associations and patterns of interpretation.

The research establishes that *happiness* and *baxt* should be regarded as partially equivalent rather than completely identical concepts. Their semantic correspondence is determined by shared human experiences, whereas their cultural interpretation is influenced by specific social values, historical traditions, and linguistic conventions.

In conclusion, the study demonstrates that the conceptualization of happiness represents a complex interaction between language, cognition, and culture. The comparative investigation of English and Uzbek provides an opportunity to understand both universal and nationally specific features of human experience. Further research may extend this analysis through corpus-based investigations of literary texts, proverbs, media discourse, and contemporary digital communication, providing additional empirical evidence of the development and transformation of happiness-related concepts.

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